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STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME
MATTERS
Resumed thirty-eighth session
16-18 September 1991, New York
Item 3 of the agenda of the
Standing Committee

DRAFT REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS ON ITS IN-SESSIONAL MEETING HELD DURING THE RESUMED THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

Rapporteur: Mr. Ivo SIEBER (Switzerland)

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING, ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The Standing Committee for Programme Matters held an in-sessional meeting during the resumed thirty-eighth session of the Governing Council, convened in New York from 16 to 18 September 1991. The fourth Vice-President of the Governing Council, Mr. Robert K. Gathungu of Kenya, served as Chairman of the Standing Committee. Mr. Ivo Sieber of Switzerland was elected Rapporteur.

2. At its first meeting, on 16 September 1991, the Standing Committee for Programme Matters adopted its provisional agenda and tentative schedule of work contained in annexes I and II of document DP/1991/L.15. The Standing Committee also agreed to maintain a flexible schedule of work and to organize informal sessions on 17 September 1991.

II. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

3. The Standing Committee for Programme Matters had before it for its consideration the following documents: report of the Administrator on Special Programme Resources: Overview and programming documents (DP/1991/64 and

Add.1); Special Programme Resources: Programming document (DP/1991/64/Add.2). The Standing Committee also had before it copies of responses by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on written comments submitted by one delegation on 15 of the programmes.

4. The session was convened to consider the proposals of the Administrator regarding the allocation of resources under the Special Programme Resources (SPR) in the context of preparations for the fifth programming cycle, including funding strategy. These proposals had been made in the light of recommendations made by the Standing Committee for Programme Matters at its in-sessional meeting in February 1991 and submitted to the Governing Council at its thirty-eighth session. However, because of the shortage of time at the thirty-eighth session of the Council, and in view of the need for further review by delegations, full discussion was postponed until the resumed thirty-eighth session.

5. Document DP/1991/64/Add.2 included funding proposals for a total of 25 programmes in six categories for a total of $313 million, including funds for contingencies. These categories related to: (a) Disaster mitigation (four programmes, $50 million); (b) Thematic activities (six programmes, $115 million); (c) Other special and/or new activities (9 programmes, $53 million); (d) Aid coordination (three programmes, $35 million); (e) Programme development (three programmes, $29 million); (f) Assistance to the Palestinian people ($15 million); and (g) Contingencies ($16 million). A full list of these proposals is given in annex 1 of the present report.

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Addendum

Summary of the discussion in the Committee

1. Twenty-three delegations made statements during the first meeting, giving their views on the Special Programme Resources (SPR) proposals, which can be summarized as follows.

2. With regard to the presentation of the programming document, some delegations remarked that the programme proposals varied greatly in quality and scope, and that they did not all follow the guidelines agreed upon at the special session of the Governing Council in February 1991. The need for a general introduction was stressed, together with a brief summary of the objectives and criteria of the SPR. Particular concern was expressed over the need to improve the assessments of prior experience for each programme during the fourth cycle and to draw lessons of experience for the fifth cycle.

3. Many delegations discussed the role of the SPR, stressing that they should be of a catalytic nature and could be used as seed money to carry out innovative and experimental initiatives, which should then be followed up through other sorces of funding. They should facilitate resource mobilization and be complementary to the country, regional and interregional indicative planning figures (IPFs). Clearer focus was thus required to ensure that specific and realistic objectives were chosen for the limited resources available, so that once achieved, SPR resources can be reoriented to other purposes. The great value of the SPR as a coordinating tool for UNDP and governments was also emphasized.

4. Some delegations raised the question of the modalities and procedures for SPR use, stressing the need to use national resources, expertise and institutions as much as possible. At the same time, emphasis was placed on the need to use the expertise of United Nations specialized agencies as appropriate while the responsible UNDP departments should provide technical and substantive support. The role of the Bureau for Programme and Policy Evaluation (BPPE) should lie in the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the use of the SPR. Mention was also made of the need to draw up clear criteria and procedures for the formulation and implementation of projects under the SPR.

5. Many delegations stressed the need for close monitoring and evaluation, so that the necessary lessons of experience are drawn, for the follow-up activities mentioned above. Suitable performance indicators should be devised. A mid-term evaluation was recommended in two or three years for each of the programmes, and for the use of the SPR as a whole.

6. The need for the eventual reallocation of resources was recognized, particularly in the light of the recommendations of the mid-term review proposed above. The possibility of transferring certain regionally focused programmes (for instance those relating to the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America (C2) and to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (C3)) to the respective regional IPFs was raised by one delegation.

7. The Standing Committee for Programme Matters then reviewed each of the programmes in turn.